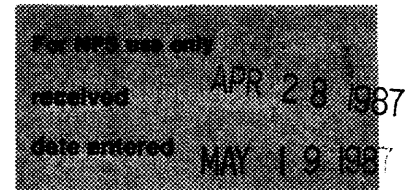


**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

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15. Malabar Branch Library
2801 E. Wabash Avenue

Significance:

For nearly seventy years, the Malabar Branch Library has played a significant role in the cultural history of Boyle Heights. Its contribution to the reading pleasure and enlightenment of various ethnic groups is illustrated by the fact that library records from 1923 showed that books from this branch were being read in Armenian, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Yiddish, as well as English. One of only eight remaining branches constructed with funds from the City's first Library Bond in 1925, it is included in a select group of branch libraries in Los Angeles nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

The branch traces its roots back to 1915 as the result of a campaign by the local improvement association and the Parent-Teacher Association of the Malabar School from which the library takes its name. The library board established a book lending service in the Brooklyn Heights Methodist Church. The library soon outgrew this location and was moved to a store building at the corner of Wabash and Evergreen where it remained until the present building was completed in 1927.

The new branch building was designed by William Lee Woollett, a local architect noted for his unique designs. Appointed a member of the Los Angeles Municipal Arts Council in 1933, he also designed the interior of the Million Dollar Theatre (in conjunction with architect A. C. Martin), the interior of the Metropolitan Theatre (in conjunction with architect Edwin Bergstrom), the Eagle Rock City Hall, and the Pilgrimage Theatre. His son, William Woollett, was a founding member of the Cultural Heritage Board.

According to the Handbook of Libraries from 1927, "The building represents a simple, direct expression of construction without attempt at ornamentation. Rough field stones are used in the foundations of the front door jambs in a manner suggesting the simple building methods of primitive people. The carving of the panel above the door is archaic and rugged, in harmony with the style of the library". A notable design which stands out in its neighborhood, the Malabar Branch exemplifies Woollett's achievement in creating designs reflecting the rural period of Latin America.

BRANCH LIBRARIES, LOS ANGELES, CA
#15 Malabar Branch, 2801 Wabash Ave.
1 inch=60 feet

